

# Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

## Sermon Series in James

### *The Testing Life*

#### *James 1:13-16*

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(All Scripture, unless noted, is from New American Standard Bible)

### James 1:13-16

<sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

<sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

<sup>15</sup> Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

<sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

In the final analysis, there are two kinds of tests in life; those from God and those that are not from God. The second kind can come from Satan or man. However, without God in a person's heart, Satan rules.

Life is full of tests. The first breath of air is a test to verify the lungs work, and we hear a great cry from infant lungs. Immediately following that first breath, parental test comes into play, and there are no timeouts. In fact, life does not have many timeouts from the tests we constantly go through. We have to make timeout periods. This is my experience. However, have you ever been tired from all the vacation activities and you need to have a few more days away from the office just to recuperate from vacation?

Life is a test. To stay alive is a test. At least this is my experience, particularly the last few years due to life threatening illness. We all, who are

of age, know too well the physical test we face every day. May not seem fair, but it is what it is. However, we have it better than the animals. Every day in the carnivorous animal kingdom some other animal has to donate their life to sustain another. So, animals live their lives challenged to stay out of the consumable food chain. I think it is better to be an animal that is of the vegetarian variety. They just eat plants. However, the plant eaters are part of the carnivorous animal food chain. I mean, they cannot escape.

So, where does this position people created in God's image, in the pecking order of life? God positions mankind at the top. Reading Genesis 1:28, 29, we see that Adam was given the task of ruling over the animal and plant life God created. God gave mankind the authority to manage all life on earth. God did this before mankind ate from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God created the creation with mankind in charge, and He planned for man not to share in the management of the creation. By accepting Satan's offer (Genesis 3), Adam and Eve chose to have Satan come into their hearts and rule with them. They gave Satan a place in their hearts. Therefore, there came a great divide between God, the Creator, the designer of life, and mankind. In fact, there came a divide between God and the whole creation. God verifies this through Paul in Romans . . .

### Romans 8:21-23

<sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

<sup>23</sup> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

So, the creation is likened to **childbirth**. These passages point to the beginning, to the account in Genesis 1 and 2. The child was birthed, but there were severe complications; and thereafter, pursued one test after another; one competitive struggle after another for the position of ruling the creation, and to make the determination of what life should be like that God created, and to determine where we will spend eternity.

Therefore, we are caught up in this struggle for life. Satan's efforts are to test and sift us (Believers) like wheat every day. Peter (**Simon**) is our example.

### Luke 22:28-32

<sup>28</sup> "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials;

<sup>29</sup> and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom,

I grant you

<sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>31</sup> "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat;

<sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail;

Therefore, it is the Lord that lifts us, so that our faith will not fail. We will have valleys and low points, but, like Peter, who Jesus restored (John 15:21ff), we, too, have a redeemed future with the Lord. Peter was restored, like David, because his heart had already been changed. The Lord lived in Peter's heart; it was just that . . . at times . . . the darkness of this world became heavy-hearted, and Peter, like us, made mistakes. But, because the Lord is there, in our hearts, underneath the weight of the fallen world, He lifts us back up.

## Reviewing James

**James 1:1** James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

<sup>2</sup> Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

<sup>4</sup> And let endurance have *its* perfect result,  
so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

<sup>5</sup> But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God,  
who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to  
him.

<sup>6</sup> But he must ask in faith without any doubting,  
for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by  
the wind.

<sup>7</sup> For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from  
the Lord,

<sup>8</sup> *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

<sup>9</sup> But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high  
position;

<sup>10</sup> and the rich man *is to glory* in his humiliation,  
because like flowering grass he will pass away.

<sup>11</sup> For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass;  
and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed;  
so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial;  
for once he has been approved,  
he will receive the crown of life  
which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

These words lead into James' next topic; **being tested in verses 13 -16 which is the focus of this weeks lesson.** Those who possess the crown of life while on this earth still have to guard against doing things in life that God has not planned for them and that goes against God's will for their lives. We are not immune from this fallen world that surrounds us. The title of a book from the 1970's is "Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth", an appropriate and accurate title. We must not forget that Satan was found to be walking about on the earth by God in Job 1.

### **Job 1:6-12**

<sup>6</sup> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Satan,  
"From where do you come?"  
**Then Satan answered the LORD and said,**  
**"From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it."**

<sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Satan,  
"Have you considered My servant Job?  
For there is no one like him on the earth,  
a blameless and upright man,  
fearing God and turning away from evil."

<sup>9</sup> Then Satan answered the LORD,

"Does Job fear God for nothing?"

<sup>10</sup> "Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

<sup>11</sup> "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."

<sup>12</sup> Then the LORD said to Satan,

"Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him."

So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

There are many lessons that we can learn from Job 1. Our time today will not permit us to examine this passage in full or the book in full. However, we do see that God and Satan are fully aware of each other's existence. We see that Satan has a position to be in the presence of people on earth and to be in God's presence. We see that God allows Satan's presence, which is consistent with God creating "free will choice" (**Genesis 2:17** Adam given choice) for all of us to exercise. Satan is the constant anti-God choice in this life and on this earth.

Like Abraham with Isaac (**Genesis 22:1**), God allows or directs a test to take place in the life of Job in order for the outcome to bring about a good thing in a person's life. Job's tests were allowed to produce good, not evil. What was the end result for Job's life? At the end of the book of Job, Job confesses and is restored. God sought Job's confession and repentance, in allowing him to be tested by Satan, not Job's destruction. Satan's goal was to get Job to curse God to his face (**Job 1:11**). Is this not the goal of Satan with

all of us? Whatever happens to us on this earth Satan seeks to turn our hearts away from God and for us to curse God to His face. Some are familiar with the story of Job, and his children, who had cursed God in their hearts and were unrepentant (**Job 1:4-5**). Many writers or preachers through history have positioned Job as the innocent victim. Mankind overall pursues their victim status and thus their sin is not their fault. However, most do not read the whole book of Job and do not compare the context of Job being blameless as compared to other biblical characters like Abraham and David who also had great sin in their life but were considered righteous and always following the Lord's commands. Job attempted to get his adult children to confess by calling them to a burnt offering continually. However, it was all Job's idea and orchestration, not his adult children. There is no Scriptural evidence that support Job's adult children ever confessed or repented. Scripture does say that Job called and conducted burnt offerings continually (**Job 1:5**). This means that Job's adult children sinned continually. They never sought the Lord on their own or changed their behavior. Job had positioned himself as the intermediary to God for his adult children (**Job 33:23-24**). Elihu chastises Job. Obviously, Job could not be the mediator to God for his children. This is what Job's sin was. In other words, Job attempted to be like Jesus Christ. No matter how holy, how blameless or perfect we think our lives are, we cannot stand in for Jesus. We cannot make sacrifices to remove other people's sin.

**Job 33:23 "If there is an angel as mediator for him,  
One out of a thousand, To remind a man what is right for him,  
<sup>24</sup> Then let him be gracious to him, and say,  
'Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom';**

Job could not use his righteous acts or life as a ransom for his children. As earnest as Job wanted to be, this is not God's plan.

1Timothy 2:5-6

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time.

Matthew 20:28

<sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The end result of their sinful life, unrepentant life, is that they, the adult children, died when a strong wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house (**Job 1:18, 19**). It was the Sabeans and the Chaldeans that killed the servants and destroyed the camels. However, it was a strong wind that actually took the lives of the adult children, not by the hand of man. Obviously, wind is associated with the Spirit of God. Was it not God's wind that blew the waters back that the Lord used to destroy Pharaoh's army as he pursued the Hebrews across the dry bed of the *Reed Sea* (**Exodus 15:10**)?

**The lesson, the test for parents** in the book of Job, is for us not to position ourselves as the mediator between God and our children. They must learn to seek God's forgiveness on their own. God has not made us the mediator. There is only one mediator. **"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (1Timothy 2:5).

So, we read James 1:13 -16, that addresses being tested by Satan for evil.

James 1:13-16

<sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is **tempted**,  
"I am being **tempted** (**peirazomenos from peirazo test**) by God";  
for God cannot be tempted **by evil**,  
and He Himself does not tempt anyone. (**by extension ~ with evil motives**)



<sup>14</sup> But each one is **tempted** when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (Note: not by God's enticement)

<sup>15</sup> Then when lust has conceived (**active verb**), it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, (**bring to completion**) it brings forth death. (**God's test brings forth life**)

<sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Examples and word study of Jesus and Abraham being tested/tempted:

Test leading to life or death?

### **Matthew 4:1**

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be **tempted** by the devil.

**Strong's 3985** πειράζω *peirazo*

**Meaning:** to make proof of, to attempt, **test, tempt**

**Origin:** from 3984

**Usage:** did(1), put(1), put to the test(2), tempt(2), tempted(13), tempter(2), test(6), tested(2), testing(7), tried(2), trying(2).

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup> Literally = *from* <sup>2</sup> Literally = *of evil things* <sup>a</sup> Gen 22:1 Hebrew "**nasah**"

**Genesis 22:1** Now it came about after these things, that **God tested** (**nasah**) **Abraham**, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

The difference in this **test, of Abraham**, and the **test** referred to in James 1:13-15 is that **God did not test with evil motives**. God did not **test** or tempt Abram with evil for an evil outcome. The outcome of Abram's test was for him to see that God provides and your life is spared. In James, there is a teaching about sin and the temptations or tests that Satan puts in front of us that does not lead to life, but leads to death.

Therefore, **God does test leading to life**, in contrast . . .  
**Satan's test or temptations lead to death.**

This is the difference in all that God does. God leads us to life, and Satan desires to lead us to our death, and not only temporal death, but separation from God and eternal death, eternal separation.

**Strong's 05254** נָסָה *nasah* (650a)

**Meaning:** *to test, try*

**Origin:** a prim. root

**Usage:** make a test(1), proved(1), put(1), put to the test(2), tempted(3), test(13), tested(9), testing(3), tried(1), try(1), venture(1), ventures(1).

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup> Deut. 8:2; 8:16; Heb 11:17; Jam 1:12-14 <sup>b</sup> Gen 22:11

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Matthew 4:7

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE **TEST**.'"

Strong's **1598** ἐκπειράζω *ekpeirazo*

**Meaning:** to **test** thoroughly, tempt

**Origin:** from 1537 and 3985

**Usage:** put(2), put...to the test(1), test(2), try(1).

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup> Literally=*Again*; <sup>a</sup> Deut. 6:16

Here are four additional references where people put Jesus to the test. These tests were all put forth with evil motives, not for good.

**Mark 8:11** The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, **to test Him**.

**Luke 10:25** And a lawyer stood up and **put Him to the test**, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

**Luke 11:16-17** <sup>16</sup> Others, **to test Him**, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.

<sup>17</sup> But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house *divided* against itself falls.

**Acts 15:10** "Now therefore why do you **put God to the test** by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

How do you see the tests in your life?

Do you identify the tests in your life for good or evil?

Do you see Satan placing tests in your life?

Do you see God placing tests in your life?

What is the biggest test God has placed in your life for good?

What is the most threatening test Satan has put in your life to destroy you?

We close today with three passages from the New Testament.

**1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

<sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

<sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

(1Jo 4:1-3 NAU)

**Revelation 2:1** "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

<sup>2</sup> 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men,

**and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles**, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false;

<sup>3</sup> and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. (Rev 2:1-3 NAU)

Revelation 3:10-11

<sup>10</sup> 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

<sup>11</sup> 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.